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# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

## Short-Term Prospects in Greece

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*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, the NSA, and the Treasury.

**Concurring:**

The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State  
The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
The Director, National Security Agency  
The Director, Division of International Security Affairs, Atomic Energy Commission  
Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury

**Abstaining:**

The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS IN GREECE

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## SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS IN GREECE

### NOTE

This Estimate assesses the present state of the Greek regime, the issues facing it, its longevity, and the likely nature of a successor. It also addresses Greek relations with the US and Western Europe, either under a continuation of the Papadopoulos regime or under a successor. The focus is on the next year or so.

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### PRÉCIS

A. The present regime in Greece is showing signs of wear and tear after six years in office, but it still commands the essential elements of power. The odds favor Papadopoulos' survival over the next year or so, but this is by no means assured. If he should go, the replacement would most likely be another member of the junta, and neither governmental policies nor attitudes toward the US would greatly change.

B. It is even possible that Papadopoulos might be ousted before the 29 July plebiscite or that other junta members, resentful of his efforts to institutionalize his control, might seek to delay the vote. We believe, however, that the voting will take place as scheduled and that Greece will become a republic headed by Papadopoulos with an extensive range of authority.

C. Once past this vote, Papadopoulos' position will be strengthened. Yet the odds on his continued rule will diminish with the passage of time, the accumulation of grievances against him in various quarters, and Greek weariness with any regime too long in power. Three categories of opposition will remain sources of concern to him:

1. *Papadopoulos' senior colleagues within the regime* have the potential to oust him, but probably will not unless and until he makes serious blunders—mishandling major issues or alienating key military elements.

2. *Army officers who feel the regime has failed* to carry out the goals of the "Revolution," has grown corrupt, and is insufficiently nationalist. Some zealots of this type exist, but the regime,

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through its security services, keeps close tabs on such persons; a successful move by them is very unlikely in the near term at least.

3. *Traditional political forces which want a return to elective government, but are virtually without power to force change on the junta so long as it remains cohesive.*

D. The attitudes of the Greek people, in favor of ties with Europe and the US, will continue largely independent of whatever government rules in Athens. Most Greeks credit the US with great potential influence over Greek affairs and believe it backs the junta. But the regime is highly resistant to suggestions from outside on what it regards as domestic Greek affairs.

1. Papadopoulos would be annoyed by public US disapproval of his political plans. Such US action probably would not result *either* in modification of those plans *or* in drastic changes of policy toward the US. However, he probably would somewhat reduce cooperation on those bilateral arrangements which serve primarily US interests.

2. Whatever Washington's policy on Greek domestic politics, the junta will be less easy to deal with than in earlier years, when it felt a more urgent need for strong US support.

E. The regime will continue to be an irritant in Greek-European relations. Athens will not enjoy smooth political relations within NATO; continued criticism of the junta, especially by smaller states, could lead to Greece's pulling out of some NATO committees, but not from NATO itself.

F. The Papadopoulos regime has, on balance, helped to keep the Cyprus situation from breaking into flame, even though some of Papadopoulos' colleagues incline toward drastic initiatives. No Greek government is likely to be more moderate over Cyprus than the present one.

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## THE ESTIMATE

### I. THE REGIME AND ITS CURRENT POSITION

1. Six years ago a junta led by Greek army officers seized power with the declared goals of halting a leftist takeover, purifying Greek society, and giving it honest and efficient government. The junta was convinced that democratic government had proved unworkable in Greece and that a strong administration was needed. It proclaimed a revolution, but it had no clear notion as to how to achieve its goals. The principal change that has occurred since the coup has been the gradual emergence of Papadopoulos as the dominant leader. However, the collegiate character of the regime, though weakened, has continued to be a restraint on his activities. The regime has ruled with the acceptance of the populace, partly because the people were weary of the political tumult of the early 1960s and partly because of favorable economic developments; per capita gross national product grew 40 percent in real terms in the 1967-1971 period. Unemployment is low thanks to modest industrial expansion and migration of workers to Western Europe.

2. The regime is beginning to experience wear and tear after six years in power; some corruption has come to light; Greece is no better administered than under the old system; and many Greeks feel the regime has lost its sense of purpose. Inflation has cropped up in the past year and is a source of concern to Greeks. There have been several developments which indicate a growth in political stirrings after several years of passivity. Papadopoulos discovered and circumvented a plot directed against him within the army in September 1972. The regime has had to contend with student strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts over a two-month period in the spring of 1973. And in late May 1973 there was an abortive challenge to the regime from within the navy.

3. The regime seized on this episode to buttress its position. The government accused the mutineers of being in collaboration with the exiled King Constantine; since the Greek Navy has been generally royalist in its loyalty, this provided a pretext to abolish the monarchy. A plebiscite is scheduled for 29 July to approve changes in the Constitution which

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will make Greece a republic for the second time in 50 years.\* The regime has also linked the naval movement with former political leaders who had also become more actively outspoken about affairs in Greece recently. The government has arrested about 60 naval officers, including a substantial number of those qualified to command ships. This purge also served as a warning to officers in other services who might entertain similar ideas.

4. The ambitious Papadopoulos saw the plebiscite as a way to put himself in office for the rest of the 1970s. Abolition of the monarchy has appeal for many in the regime, especially those of second rank. Indeed, only a minority in Greece supports Constantine and the monarchy today. (At some future time, it may serve the purpose of some factions to work for reinstituting it.) But the plebiscite offers no real choice since there is no alternative to the constitutional changes or to the candidacies of Papadopoulos and Armed Forces Chief Angelis for President and Vice President.

5. There are few tools available with which to measure public opinion in Greece or the extent of popular support for the Papadopoulos regime: the press is controlled, public opinion polls do not exist, and observers' reports by and large reflect specific topics rather than the overall situation. Such information as is available indicates that the acceptance the regime had enjoyed has lately begun to erode, even in rural areas. Large business interests have made their peace with the Papadopoulos government. As for labor, some factions have been restive; others have courted the regime's favor; no clear pattern has emerged. The urban professional classes, with hopes of playing political roles again, are a

\*Greeks will vote on 34 changes in the 1968 Constitution which eliminate all vestiges of the monarchy and give wide powers to the presidency. A yes vote will also put Papadopoulos in office as President for a term which expires on 1 June 1981.

source of antagonism. So is a sizeable portion of the university student body, with student complaints over academic issues beginning to take on a political flavor.

6. Within the regime itself, the strengths of various factions and persons is far from clear. Some members are apprehensive over the way Papadopoulos is using the monarchy/plebiscite issue to strengthen his position. He is planning to reduce selectively the military component of the government later this year, and this would affect a number of former officers who were members of the original coup group. (He evidently intends to retain officers who have strong military backing.) Other members of the regime are concerned that even a carefully rigged vote will open the door for a return to parliamentary elective government, which few in the regime want. Still others believe that the plebiscite cannot be successfully managed, despite the regime's control of the administration, the police and security services and its domination of the news media. They fear that the regime's claim to legitimacy could be damaged by a too transparent rigging of the vote.

## II. NEAR-TERM PROSPECTS

7. The next few weeks could produce a challenge to Papadopoulos. There is an outside chance of a move against Papadopoulos and the regime by former junta member Stamatelopoulos; he would need the active support of a key figure such as military security chief Ioannides to have any hope of success. Another possibility is that junta members who want to stop Papadopoulos from getting more power might decide to move before he is publicly chosen as President for eight years. Such persons might seek ways of postponing or cancelling the plebiscite. Regime leaders probably wish to avoid this, fearing it would weaken their claim to govern. All things considered, we estimate that the

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plebiscite will take place on schedule, that there will be a certain amount of rigging to ensure that Papadopoulos gets the substantial majority he thinks he needs, and that Greece will become a republic.

8. Although the name will change, the system will not. The political attitudes of the regime leaders vary on certain issues, but they are united by the imperatives of survival and by the belief that a continuation of their government is best for Greece. Although the regime coupled its announcement abolishing the monarchy and proclaiming the plebiscite with indications that some freeing up of the political process was in prospect, the evidence since then indicates that moves in the direction of elective politics are not likely. After first implying that elections would be held in 1974, Papadopoulos has backtracked and now promises only that a date for elections to the Parliament will be announced during 1974.

### III. ONCE PAST THE PLEBISCITE

9. If Papadopoulos secures the expected majority in the 29 July voting, he will have achieved a certain legitimacy and his position will be strengthened at least for a time. Yet there will continue to be three broad categories of opposition forces about which he must remain concerned:

10. *Traditional Political Forces.* Certain of the pre-junta political leaders are showing signs of activity, but neither individually or collectively are they very strong. Many are in exile; those representing the extremes of right and left are fairly well discredited within Greece. Karamanlis and other centrist leaders have begun to cooperate, but they can do little to affect the junta's control as long as it remains cohesive and as long as there is no crying domestic issue around which Greeks

can rally in opposition to the regime. Hence they are not likely to force change on the regime in the near term.

11. *There is also the possibility of a coup against the junta from within the Greek armed forces.* There are some officers, mostly under the rank of lieutenant colonel, who feel that the regime has failed to carry out the goals of the "Revolution," has grown corrupt, and is insufficiently nationalist. These officers display signs of zealotry and hyper-nationalism. Such elements reportedly participated in abortive coups of 1970 and 1972, but we have no indications that a coup by such elements is now in the works. In general, our information on political factions within the Greek Army is spotty. The regime itself is aware of such attitudes. It takes pains to keep officers who hold them under surveillance and away from sensitive command positions. We think it capable of detecting a move and neutralizing it.

12. *A falling-out within the regime is the most likely way in which Papadopoulos would be replaced.* His senior colleagues—Pattakos, Makarezos, Angelis, and Ioannides—or a faction of them, acting in association with the second rank members, have the potential to oust Papadopoulos. They and their subordinates control the armed forces in Greece. Ioannides is a key figure, since he controls the domestic military intelligence apparatus and has the personal loyalty of some of the second rank officers. Most of the regime's leaders still prefer to have Papadopoulos in office, if only because he is reasonably adroit and is bearing the brunt of criticism. Yet all of them know that Papadopoulos is personally ambitious and would like to cut some of them down to size if not remove them from power entirely.

13. On the whole, however, unless Papadopoulos gets into grave trouble by clearly mishandling major issues or alienates key mili-

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tary elements, the other junta members would probably not move against him. Although the troubles of the past 12 months have been significantly larger than in previous years, they have not reached critical proportions. But as time passes, the odds on Papadopoulos' continued rule will go down; growing public demand for participation in rule will require moves on his part which will increase the chances of a misstep. And the desire for a new face in charge will grow; many Greeks are tired of the present one. Other members of the junta could seek his removal as the way to preserve their own position.

#### IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE OF GREEK DEVELOPMENTS

14. The attitudes of the Greek people toward Europe and the US are largely independent of whatever government rules in Athens. Greece considers itself part of Europe and its orientation is westward—culturally, economically, and politically. Moreover, Greek military leaders, in particular, are of a conservative bent, dislike communism, and look to the West for arms. Hence, the broad framework of Greek policies would be similar, whether under Papadopoulos or under the junta if it ousted him. On any given issue, the personal convictions of those in charge of Greece would make the government easier or more difficult to deal with. But differences would be largely of degree. The observations below apply to a situation in which the regime persists in office, with or without Papadopoulos at its head. (Paragraphs 26 and 27 address contingencies which would involve a sharp break with the policies of recent years.)

##### The United States

15. Of all Greece's Western associates, the US is the most important. Bilateral ties are strong, and there is a very substantial inter-

action between the US and Greece. The US is a factor in the political process in Greece, since Greek public opinion credits the US with the power to shape developments within the country. Most Greeks think that Washington is thoroughly behind Papadopoulos and his regime, and he exploits this belief to strengthen his personal position. Papadopoulos, for his part, is committed to cooperation with the US on matters of mutual benefit, but he is not responsive to the US in matters which he considers touch the durability of his control. He, and the regime, have been highly resistant over the years to suggestions from any outsiders on such matters as restoration of elective government.

16. Papadopoulos has told the US that he will brook no interference in his current plans to reshape the Greek Government. He would be annoyed by any public expression of US disapproval of his plans. But he probably would not go so far as to *either* modify his political plans *or* make drastic changes in Greek policy toward the US. Rather, Papadopoulos probably would complain aloud of interference in Greek politics and somewhat reduce cooperation on those bilateral arrangements which primarily serve US interests.

17. Whatever Washington's policy on Greek domestic politics in the months ahead, the US has probably already experienced the best years of its relationship with the Greek junta. In this regime's early years in power, the appearance of US support was more important to Papadopoulos than it is today. The regime no longer sees such a compelling need to accommodate US desires. There will be frictions arising from the proposed major expansion of US military facilities in Greece. A carrier task force is due to be homeported near Athens beginning in February 1974. Consideration is being given to building a large pier to berth the carrier. This would bring the American naval contingent in that area

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to some 7,500 service men and 4,000 dependents. (There are also some 2,500 air force personnel and dependents.) The US presence will be a very visible one in the Athens area.

18. This is not to say that the second phase of the homeporting program will not go through on schedule, nor that the Greeks necessarily will want to halt or cut down on other US military facilities or programs under way. Most of these are related to the NATO alliance and, in addition, are of benefit to Greece. But the regime is likely to be fussier on details, less willing to agree to some project on short notice, and more disposed to exercise supervision to see that the facilities are not used in a way the Greeks regard as derogating from their sovereignty. (When a Greek opposition figure left Greece illegally from a US military installation in 1972, the government was affronted and moved to restore a measure of Greek control over it.) In addition, the junta will probably, in certain circumstances, seek domestic political advantage through criticism of the US presence.

#### Western Europe and NATO

19. The junta's relations in this theatre are likely to be more troubled than they are with the US. Many Europeans labor under the impression that only the ambitions of a few colonels prevent Greece from being a classic democracy. The regime resents the actions and words of some European states as intervention in Greek domestic affairs. Greece withdrew from the Council of Europe when it seemed about to be expelled for its lack of democracy.

20. Although Greece is a conscientious member of NATO, Athens will not enjoy smooth political relations within that organization. Various West European governments will keep calling attention to the incompati-

bility of the non-democratic character of the regime with the preamble to the treaty establishing NATO. Domestic political parties that would like to make Greece's position in NATO intolerable are especially strong in Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway. But no West European government wants a major quarrel with Washington over Greece, regardless of the character of Athens' regime, and all recognize Greece's strategic importance to NATO. Nonetheless, the possibility that a damaging confrontation within NATO might take place is real. Greece could, say, respond to continued criticism by ceasing to participate in one or more NATO committees. But even if gestures of this sort were made, Greece is not likely to diminish its military cooperation with NATO, and a complete Greek withdrawal from that organization is highly unlikely.

21. In other aspects of European, or indeed Atlantic, relationships, Greece is a factor of limited importance. Although trade and international finance are major concerns to Greece, Greece is of little consequence in either regard. Its total trade in 1972 amounted to some \$3 billion, less than one percent of total European trade. Its reserves are similarly small in relation to all Europe's. Greece simply is not in a position to influence European financial or trade matters to any great extent.

22. Greece signed an association agreement with the Common Market in 1961, which calls for the establishment, over a period of years, of a full customs union and the harmonizing of Greek social and economic policies with the Market. Currently half of Greece's international trade is with the Nine. Over the long term, relations between Greece and the European Community will be difficult, since acceptance of full Greek membership, scheduled for the early 1980s, will ultimately be decided more on political than

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on economic grounds. Barring unexpectedly rapid movement toward liberalization, Greece will remain outside the Community.

23. In other European groups, Greece stands to play a small role. Greek representatives will probably be active in various committees of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe working on declarations of purpose. But in this as in many other European matters, they will be chiefly concerned to defend Greece from others' meddling and are unlikely to take the lead in any serious way.

#### Cyprus

24. The Papadopoulos regime has, on balance, helped to keep the Cyprus situation from breaking into flame. Under the rigidly controlled political conditions in Athens, political figures cannot make headlines by inflammatory declarations on Cyprus. Papadopoulos has made it perfectly clear that Greek-Turkish hostilities over Cyprus would be in the interests of neither country. Both Athens and Ankara have in recent months urged their respective clients on the island to try to compose their deep differences sufficiently so as to restore some normalcy after a dozen years of tension and division. Some members of the junta are more inclined than Papadopoulos toward drastic initiatives on the Cyprus problem. But these tendencies are likely to be restrained by the collegiate character of the junta. It would be unlikely, however, that any Greek government would be more moderate than the present one.

25. But it must also be noted that the ability of the junta—or of any Greek regime—to be conciliatory on this issue is closely related to its own sense of security and self-confidence. Should the government feel weakened politically in coming months, it might yield to demagogic and nationalistic urges on the Cyprus issue.

#### A Totally New Military Junta

26. Speculating on the probable policies of an unknown group of military officers is seldom fruitful. In this case the question is addressed, since, although not likely, a radical new military junta is probably the only realistic contingency which would entail a sharp break with Greek policies of the past half-dozen years. It is possible that a new, more nationalistic leadership would decide that Greece had become too closely associated with the US and while maintaining its NATO ties, would reduce the bilateral relationship with the US. But even in this case, there are distinct limits on how far any such government could go. We would be quite confident in ruling out the takeover by an ultranationalist, anti-Western leader on the Nasser pattern. Such an orientation would be contradictory to deeply-held values in Greek society and hardly feasible for Greece's material or security interests.

#### A Further Contingency

27. If Papadopoulos were replaced or the junta itself ousted, a principal effect would be to call into question the legitimacy of government in Athens. That is to say, the 1967 military coup which aimed at "purifying" Greece had a certain amount of justification, since many in Greece felt that Greek society could stand a little purifying. A second military move would look more like a power-grab by self-seeking military officers. If one colonel felt called upon to seize power, then a second could feel equally justified. And if the regime in Athens were to change frequently through the agency of military force, the resulting loss of legitimacy would provide a target against which conventional forces could rally. At such a future time, the civilian side of the Greek political scene would heat up fairly quickly, throwing open the whole future of Greek politics.

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